

June 22, 2000

Campbell/Bonior Amendment to Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Appropriations Act

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Statement of HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS

[Pages: H5000]

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment, and I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. **Campbell**) for bringing this amendment to the floor, along with his colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. **Bonior**). This is a crucial amendment. It is vital that we pass it.

This is truly a civil libertarian issue. It does go back to 1215 with the Magna Carta. It is not an American invention, that people should be protected and not convicted on secret information. This is not something new. However, it has been abused for hundreds of years at least. It has been abused by totalitarian governments.

Now, many may say today that this is not a big deal; this is not going to affect the American citizens; it is just a couple of poor old immigrants that may be affected. But what is the motivation for the national ID card? It's good motivation to make sure there are no illegal immigrants coming in. So it's said we need a national ID card. But who suffers from a national ID card? Maybe some immigrants, and maybe there will be an illegal one caught? But who really suffers? The American people. Because they will become suspect, especially maybe if

they look Hispanic or whatever.

Well, who suffers here? Well, first the immigrant who is being abused of his liberties. But then what? Could this abuse ever be transferred to American citizens? That is the real threat. Now, my colleagues may say, oh, no, that would never happen. Never happen. But that is not the way government works. Government works with incrementalism. It gets us conditioned, gets us to be soft on the protection of liberty.

Our goal should not be to protect the privacy of government. Certainly we need security, and that is important; but privacy of government and the efficiency of government comes second to the protection of individual liberty. That is what we should be here for. I wish we would do a lot less of a lot of other things we do around here and spend a lot more of our efforts to protect liberty. And we can start by protecting the liberty of the weak and the difficult ones to defend, the small, the little people who have nobody to represent them, the ones who can be pushed around. That is what is happening, all with good intentions.

The national ID card is done with good intention. Those who oppose us on this amendment, I think they are very, very sincere, and they have justifiable concerns and we should address these. But quite frankly, killing and murder for a long time, up until just recently, was always a State matter. This is rather a new phenomenon that we as a Federal Government have taken over so much law enforcement. That is why the Federal Government, when it sets this precedent, is very bad.

So I plead with my colleagues. I think this is a fine amendment. I think this not only goes along with the Constitution, but it really confirms what was established in 1215 with the Magna Carta. We should strongly support the principle that secret evidence not be permitted to convict anyone in an American court.